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SCHEDULE OF THE CALTRAK SAN DIEGAN

Read Down		Station		Read Up
4:10 p.m.	LV	Los Angeles	AR	10:55 p.m.
4:45 p.m.	LV	Fullerton	LV	10:20 p.m.
5:01 p.m.	LV	Santa Ana	LV	10:02 p.m.
5:21 p.m.	LV	San Juan Capistrano	LV	9:40 p.m.
5:49 p.m.	LV	Oceanside	LV	9:11 p.m.
6:09 p.m.	LV	Del Mar	LV	8:50 p.m.
6:45 p.m.	AR	San Diego	LV	8:20 p.m.

RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

Rec'd 9-10-76

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One is the continued high popularity of the COAST STARLIGHT. The second is the availability of Amfleet equipment. An added feature which has always been present but has never been discussed in this context is the cost of turning trains 796 and 797 in Portland. I believe that these factors, combined with a high seating density, make the subject worth examining.

FORMAT: Northbound train originates at Oakland, runs to Portland. Lays in Portland overnight pointed north. Windows washed and interior cleaned as now done for 796/797. On second morning equipment proceeds north as train 796. Southbound train originates at Seattle, runs to Portland as train 797. Lays in Portland overnight pointed south. Windows washed and interior cleaned as now done for 797/797. On third morning equipment proceeds south as SHASTA DAYLIGHT. Note that the cleaning crew has handled both trains within their single shift.

Equipment is Amfleet, 84-seat coaches, Amcafe with tables on one end, Amclub on other end. Checked baggage and express and mail handled.

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	9:20 pm	ar Portland	lv	8:30 am
	7:00 am	lv Portland	ar	12:05 am
	8:13 am	lv Salem	lv	10:41 pm
	8:48 am	lv Albany	lv	10:06 pm
Spectacular mountain scenery	9:40 am	lv Eugene	lv	9:20 pm
	2:20 pm	lv Klamath Falls	lv	4:40 pm
	5:00 pm	lv Dunsmuir	lv	1:55 pm
	6:40 pm	lv Redding	lv	11:55 am
	7:55 pm	lv Orland	lv	10:37 am
	9:45 pm	lv Davis	lv	9:15 am
	10:26 pm	lv Martinez	lv	8:12 am
	11:25 pm	ar Oakland	lv	7:30 am

Robert W. Rynerson
Portland, Oregon

(continued on page 19)

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Rail Canada

A CANADIAN NATIONAL late-summer passenger wrapup: CN passenger VP Garth Campbell made the following observations on CN passenger developments in an interview with the Toronto Globe & Mail in mid-August: (1) Canada's reputation for high costs, and the premium at which the Canadian dollar now stands, have decreased tourist travel on CN lines this summer. Passenger traffic originating at U.S. points is down, he said, and there is some evidence that Canadians are bypassing travel in the Dominion for travel thru the U.S. where costs are lower. (2) Bookings have been down on the SUPER CONTINENTAL, which has operated only in one section this summer, compared to the usual two. He said an equipment shortage prevented operation of the second daily consist. (3) In contrast, Montreal-Toronto patronage is running about 12% ahead of 1975's summer volume, and the Ottawa-Toronto bus connection (made at Kingston) is doing well. (4) Due to increased auto and bus competition, passenger volume on the Quebec City-Montreal and Montreal-Ottawa runs has declined. He also reported CN traffic to and from Detroit (CN "Tempo" service from Toronto) was also off. Press dispatches did not discuss the Quebec City-Montreal or Ottawa-Montreal declines, which came during the period of the 1976 Olympic Games, held in Montreal this July.

CN AND CP Rail this fall will begin closer cooperation in providing passenger service, according to CN President Dr. Robert A. Bandeen. The blue-and-yellow paint scheme introduced recently by CN will be applied to passenger equipment of both companies, symbolizing their intent at providing integrated passenger service. A joint timetable listing all services will be issued in the fall. Emphasis will be on fast intercity service in dense population areas. For this reason, the two railways have called for tenders for 10 high-speed trains to be financed by the Federal government. Said Bandeen, "The government has recognized that since passenger services have no hope of making a profit, it cannot expect the railways to provide new passenger equipment financed in the normal way." Bandeen said that any attempt to retain long-distance passenger trains is just "nostalgia."

THE WINDSOR STATION ticket office of CP Rail now issues CN tickets. CP ticket agents across Canada have been advised to accept applications for CN tickets, which will be issued from Windsor Station and mailed to them.

MONTREAL-QUEBEC CITY train service undergoes some changes September 1, when Quebec City's Palais station, used jointly by CN and CP Rail, will be closed. CN had previously announced in its timetables that the station at St. Foy would be used, but has now issued another statement that it will be used at least temporarily, suggesting that another facility might be considered. CP Rail has announced that it has constructed a new station in Quebec at 200 St. Sacrement Street, which is presumably closer to downtown than is CN's St. Foy station. Meanwhile the Mayor of Quebec City has announced that Palais station will not be demolished but will be used for non-rail purposes, perhaps for a market.

SALE OF LIQUOR on Canadian trains is, as everyone knows, governed by provincial regulations. In an interesting move, CN applied to the Ontario Liquor Licence Board for permission to serve alcoholic drinks to coach passengers at their seats. The Board chairman rejected the request, saying that passengers have access to liquor in lounge and dining cars. Only first class passengers may be served liquor in their seats. Recently the Board granted a request to serve drinks to overnight passengers in "enclosed space" (bedrooms and roomettes, but not berths). CN's director of passenger operations said train travelers are being discriminated against, since airline passengers are served at their seats in economy as well as first class. "Except for the Turbo, railway passengers must travel first class to enjoy such a privilege." It is expected that the Turbo will remain the exception to this rule, and that the Board's decision may set a precedent for similar decisions elsewhere.

CN WILL LAUNCH soon an advertising campaign, to cost over $1 million; and a part of that expense will be to help Canadians to understand that fewer passenger trains will be good for them, according to Toronto Star writer Gordon Legge. Theme for

(continued on page 10)

THE READERS COMMENT

MORE READER COMMENTS FROM OUR THIRD TRAIN RATING SURVEY

TURBOTRAIN

"We went to great inconvenience to ride this train with its ridiculous 5:54am departure from Providence. Needless to say, patronage was very light, but it was one of the highlights of our trip. It was our first experience on a Turbo, and sitting on the upper level of the rear car afforded the best view of the Corridor we have ever had. The train attracted a lot of attention from patrons at stops. Its external appearance was a little shoddy--it needs a new paint job. This fine train should be run at reasonable hours and with a little publicity" (Perry S. Huntoon, Houston TX).

"Amtrak appears to have 'written off' these trains and there is little special promotion of them. Too bad, as the dome car ride along the scenic shore line is great" (Maryland reader).

"View from mini-dome is magnificent. From the front dome, if you arrive early enough to get one of the 'railfan' seats, you can have the equivalent of a cab ride. Better quality of baked goods would have made breakfast more enjoyable, but attendant did offer to heat pastry and my request for extra ice with the orange juice was cheerfully complied with" (William McCaffrey, Cambridge MA).

TURBOLINER

"A smooth-riding, reliable, attractive train. I feel it definitely rides better than conventional equipment. Lousy, overpriced food and beverage service (40¢ for soft drinks). Huge, glass windows make for excellent scenery viewing. Comfortable seating. The type of equipment that attracts and keeps passengers" (Alan S. Buck, Ft. Wayne IN).

"They ride roughly on the Penn Central (Detroit route) track. I have ridden this route several times before and found the ride extremely smooth in conventional equipment" (Ron Cady, Cheboygan MI).

"The Turbos are beginning to get a little worn, and reclining seats would be nice, but overall I found them much more pleasant than the Amfleet, especially their BIG windows with curtains. Milwaukee's track needs some work" (Stephen Miller, Carlsbad CA).

"The Turbos serve their function fairly well, altho they are cramped and should not be used for any longer run. There are still problems with the (Detroit-Chic) food service: the cafeteria is often not open until an hour or more after departure, and the supplies tend to be inadequate. First class service should be available" (Duane W. Roller, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada).

METROLINER

"A fantastic modern high-speed train" (Jeff Cole, Carpinteria CA).

"Enjoyed smoothness of ride very much. Service in Metroclub was excellent--attendant took time to play with children for a few minutes. Seating arrangements and comfort very good. Car interior not in best repair. In all tho, riding in a Metroclub car was delightful--a real pleasure" (James Hofmeister, Houston TX).

"Our first experience on Metroliners. Quite up to our expectations, except that those cars repainted in Amtrak colors were already peeling. The use of an intercom on these and Amfleet trains to announce station stops is a big plus" (Perry S. Huntoon, Houston TX).

"Cars have continued to deteriorate. Ride is poor" (David Peironnet, Knoxville TN).

"Car very uncomfortable because of heat. No help from crew"(E. G. Stook, Lynchburg VA).

"Equipment is very good, but it is ridiculous to have the Food Service car at

the front of the train... There should be prominent 'No Smoking' signs on the outside of the no-smoking cars. In the rush of loading at Penn Station the power was not yet hooked up, so the no-smoking signs were not on. A conductor told me that all the rear cars were no-smoking; they were not, so I ended up in the last car where people were smoking, which I discovered after the no-smoking cars were filled. By New Haven, Food Service had run out of all coffee and milk" (Paul R. Wendt, Carbondale IL).

"On-board telephone connection to cities enroute is very clear. This service should be retained. The Metroliners prove that clean, well-advertised and pleasant trains do attract passengers. Track extremely rough, especially for high-speed trains" (Ken Peale, APO San Francisco).

SILVER METEOR

"The best and most enjoyable trip made on a train in recent years, and I give Amtrak credit for restoring the METEOR to what it was shen it was the pride and joy of the Seaboard. The condition of the cars indicates that Amtrak is now master of the situation and believe it or not I did not observe one thing that was mechanically wrong going or coming. I did note that there were two or more 'trouble shooters' on board, but for the exception of repairing a water cooler, there was not much for them to do. It's too bad that Florida trains cannot be routed via FEC along the beautiful Indian River and thru such lovely cities as St. Augustine, Ormond Beach, Daytona Beach, Titusville, Cocoa (Cape Canaveral), Melbourne, and Fort Pierce. Track and roadbed conditions are excellent now, and several times at maximum speed I noted passengers walking thru the lounge car without grabbing things to keep from falling" (Jack Fritz, Jr., Charleston SC).

"Greatly improved since last season, but still lacks a hostess" (Walter E. Zullig, Jr., Larchmont NY).

"Overall an excellent trip enjoyed by both my wife and myself. We were on time all the way, very early into Miami. Only two drawbacks were: (1) The Lexan window in the bedroom was barely transparent, which made it inconvenient to spend much of the day in our room. (2) The sleeper lounge attendant was a classic Penn Central type who could not be bothered to lift a finger to do his job. You got service by helping yourself, then paying him. Very sullen man, but rest of crew was great" (Intis Vanags, San Ramon CA).

"Only two of four ceiling lights worked, so could not read. No electricity at all from Washington to New York, and was hot. Plastic mattress and foam rubber pillow were hot" (William Stroh III, Short Hills NJ).

"Even tho there was a recreation car, the TVs were boarded up and no games at all were played. Losing the recreation service may result in the downfall of this train, which was always a great favorite with families. On both occasions I rode this train during the peak season there were no hors d'oeuvres, as advertised. The sleeper lounge cars made the trip nicer" (Danny Vaccaro, Great Neck NY).

NORTH COAST HIAWATHA

"A most spectacular ride. From right outside of Billings, Montana, I get a glimpse of the snow-topped Rockies. The excitement of the climb never ends. Winding around the mountains towards the top, an easy-going speed of about 25mph is maintained, allowing maximum pleasure for viewing the valleys below" (Frederic Hirsch, New York City, NY).

"Worst train ridden. Service not friendly. Dome lounge had too small a service area. Also, Traveller's Rest car as full diner was not adequate. Mixup on reservations out of Chicago was handled roughly by porter. Cars need work. Crews need lesson in being polite" (Robert Bedford, Minneapolis MN).

CHAMPION

"Epitome of what a passenger train should be. Extremely friendly crew, especially lounge car steward. Carries slumbercoach, legrest coaches, two diners; lounge 3352 had swivel parlor-type seats--car is a personal favorite; and sleeper lounge.

Arrived early in St. Pete--schedule could be trimmed" (Joe Busby, Rock Hill SC).

"Excellent train crew and service crew. Very friendly and professional. The crews made you feel that they were glad to have you on board and would want you back again. Very nice trip. I thought trip couldn't be topped, but it was on the return trip. Conductor was so friendly and talkative that I thought I had taken a step back in time. The lounge was an old SP lounge from the SUNSET, and was still in SP colors and in excellent shape. The attendant served you at your seat and again it was like taking a step back in time. Also, he kept the lounge open all the way to St. Pete, which is unusual nowadays. Dining car was in beautiful shape considering it was built in 1939. The dining car crew looked like they had been with the car since it was built. The crew in the diner was very attentive and catered to your every whim. Overall the crew was older than on the other trains I have ridden, and the experience showed thru to give me the best train ride that I have had since the early 50's" (Andrew J. Bianchi, Chicago IL).

ADIRONDACK

"Has received too much uncritical praise. Schedule is really too slow for this train to be viable as intercity transportation. Dome is a plus--when it is in the consist. Diners are nicely refurbished, but food is only fair. Old coaches, despite attractive paint, are prone to frequent A/C failures. Food service crew was indifferent to customers. I wondered if rumors of withdrawal of N.Y. state subsidy had demoralized some of the crew" (Walter F. Smith, Lisbon NY).

"The June 13 southbound run of the ADIRONDACK is one which deserves to be forgotten. For the entire run, Montreal to New York, there was no dining car, even tho the trip included the lunch and dinner hours (apparently only two diners are assigned to this route, and one of them was out of service). Passengers were forced to eat Amtrak's disgusting prepackaged sandwiches, which is obviously cruel and unusual on a 10-hour trip. There was a dome car between Montreal and Albany, but the glass was so dirty that I could hardly see out of it. To compound the aggravation my wife and I had already suffered, signal failure south of Poughkeepsie resulted in a one-hour delay. We were angry enough to assault any Amtrak employee who might have appeared. Yes, there is a lot of great scenery along the route, but we could not enjoy it because we were hungry. Perhaps some day I will be able to enjoy the Hudson Valley, Lake Champlain, and the mountains from a properly equipped ADIRONDACK, but I am sure that my wife will not be at my side after this experience. I had heard great things about the ADIRONDACK. I was looking forward to a great train ride, and it turned out to be a disaster. I resent being deprived of the chance to enjoy the 'D&H experience' because I do not have many opportunities to travel. The worst part of the whole experience was seeing my wife turned off to long distance train travel. She did not want to ride the train to begin with, but I convinced her to try it on the grounds that it was supposed to be one of Amtrak's best trains. Instead, it confirmed her suspicion that if a trip is more than four hours on the ground, one has to fly. And if she won't ride trains, I won't either when traveling with her. Amtrak had a great opportunity to impress her. They blew it" (Stephen Linde, New York City, NY).

"Absolutely worst trip of the year. D&H trainman greeted my question about the missing dome, 'It's in the shop, buddy; why didn't you go on the bus if you wanted a dome?' In 20 years and 100,000+ miles of train travel, this was the rudest and surliest crew I have ever encountered. The D&H food personnel made a big fuss when I presented my American Express Card for payment. I was mentally exhausted by the time we reached Albany. I was surprised and disappointed because I was looking forward to the D&H crew and train. My first trip and unfortunately my last" (Stephen E. Morse, Marshall MN).

"I wonder if readers' high ratings for this train do not partially stem from a predisposition to enjoy it, as railfans persist in pretending it is a private operation like the SOUTHERN CRESCENT or RGZ" (Michael Leighton, Mount Kisco NY).

LAST DAYS OF THE LAS VEGAS LIMITED

By Peter Putnam Bretz

On a hot afternoon in Los Angeles a few Fridays ago, I watched the LAS VEGAS LIMITED twist over the concrete-lined Los Angeles River and disappear into the smog towards Nevada. I had rejected the idea of riding it "just now" as I had other plans. The following day these plans took me into the Los Angeles Union Passenger Depot for a quick Amfleet ride to San Diego, and I spotted a discontinuance notice on the train board. RTN had said it was "just a formality," but too many Las Vegas trains had come and gone for me to chance it. Why, just under Amtrak's eye we've seen the LAS VEGAS FUN TRAIN run for one season and then disappear; and then the big ballyhoo of the LAS VEGAS CELEBRITY TRAIN complete with Milton Berle and other personalities, just fade away quietly. Now, a possible third demise.

Sunday morning I boarded a Hughes Air West DC-9 for a non-stop flight to the desert city. Within the hour, I looked down and spied the wavy wide lanes of Interstate 10, and the symmetrical curves of the Union Pacific. Way down there, I could see, I thought, yellow freight cars moving along. Soon I'll be on those rails.

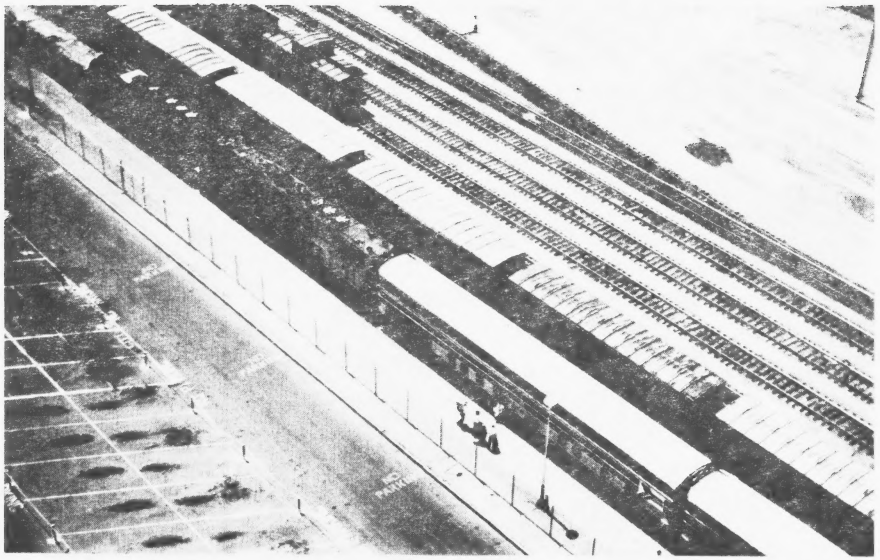
After landing and a $2.00 bus ride, I was dropped off at the Union Plaza Hotel, built on the site of the old UP station. I checked my bag at the train "terminal" --a small sitting room in the hotel, facing the tracks. I was given a free drink ticket and used it at the Iron Horse Bar in the main casino. Time passed quickly, and about an hour before train time, people began drifting into the small waiting room. As passengers began loading onto the train, I took the hotel's elevator to the 21st floor and walked out on the balcony. From this vantage point I could see the entire railroad operation of the Union Pacific here. I took some photos of the passenger train below, which was made up of the following equipment: engines 220 (F40PH), 502 (SDP40F, with old-style red nose); 2 hi-level ex-Santa Fe coaches 9936 & 9930; lounge 3501, diner 8500, and two more hi-levels, 9904 & 9946.

I secured a seat in my favorite location, at the rear of the last car. The train filled to about 75% capacity with roundtrippers returning from a weekend at the gaming tables. Some, however, paid one-way fares, as I did. Right at 2pm we glided away from the Union Plaza Hotel and Las Vegas.

As time passed, passengers broke out their own food, but most trundled to the lounge car and brought back soft drinks, or went to the diner to eat. After we left the mountainous area about 15 miles south of town, and crossed under the Interstate, I went down to lunch myself--literally down, as I walked downstairs from the hi-level coaches. Diner 8500 is former SP 10204, built by Pullman-Standard in 1949 for the SAN FRANCISCO OVERLAND. It contained a mixture of SP Green diner seats and red-brown coffee shop chairs, with a plain, unrefurbished interior. The air conditioning was old and weak, but the car gradually cooled off. Service was very good, the waiters attentive and polite to all passengers. The special menu featured a good sandwich variety plus two hot meal selections--even soup, chili and salad available. The prices were reasonable, even less than the main line trains. I had the very tasty chopped sirloin dinner with creole sauce.

The train slowed and went into a siding at Moore. Before the wheels stopped, an eastbound UP freight whizzed by, with two Centennial diesels hauling it, with a "tiny" SD40 (?) spliced between them. In nothing flat we were moving again thru the mesquite and Joshua trees. It was thru this section that I'd enjoyed a dome dining car breakfast with yellow tablecloths back in far-distant 1964.

The conductor finally came by and requested my ticket. I handed him my Bank-Americard. "No printer", he said. But... that really turned out to be no problem at all. Just copy the numbers onto the forms (plenty of those) and that's that.

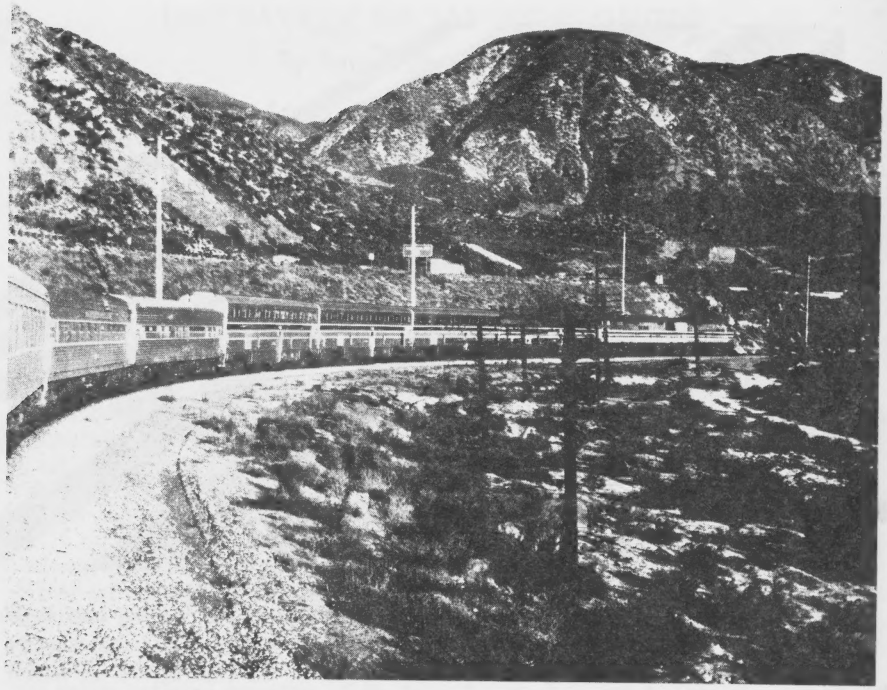


From the top of the Union Plaza Hotel in Las Vegas, we are looking down on the LAS VEGAS LIMITED consist on the Sunday afternoon of July 26. Passengers are boarding for the return run to Los Angeles, one of the last before the August 8 discontinuance. From a color transparency by Peter Bretz.

I paid $19.50 to San Bernardino. Ah, such a pleasure to encounter competent staff. Needless to say, the waiter received his generous tip.

After a leisurely meal, I repaired across the vestibules to the lounge car. Drink in hand, I settled down in ex-SP 2982, part of the same order from Pullman-Standard from which the diner had come--this car used also on the OVERLAND. My records indicated that both these flat-roofed cars arrived from the builder painted two-tone gray. The chairs are strong, metal covered with cushioning of pastel red and blue cord in the traditional manner. There are "real" card tables (with suit designs), a couple of deep divans, and a number of magazine racks (empty, of course) and even a writing desk. At the far end of the car is a beautiful curved bar with rail. This car was comfortable. The one sour note was the reluctance of the air conditioner to function well. Occasionally it would manage a cool breath or two, but the desert was just a little too much after this many years. Still... bless me, this is pleasant, riding on the rail. Amtrak, please leave this wonderful car well enough alone. Don't scrap it, please, and don't refurbish it!

My reverie dies down with our speed as we stop at Yermo. We're out after two minutes at 4:45pm (we had breezed thru Kelso at 3:41). Pretty soon we joined the Santa Fe tracks at Dagget. I wondered how long it would be until I could again ride a passenger train on those UP rails? We stopped outside Barstow to give the engines a drink, then slipped into the station. It was 5:05pm. We sweated out the stop there until 5:40 when it was time to leave. Not since Amtrak's 1972 CHIEF was it possible to leave Barstow for the west at this time of day. I reluctantly left the lounge with a 7-Up, watched out the hi-level back of the train as we descended Cajon. Finally, I stepped off at San Bernardino at 7:17pm. Still running ahead of schedule, the train waited until 7:30 to leave. Surprisingly, a passenger boarded at this point, complete with suitcases. Maybe he was going to L.A. to catch the SUNSET LIMITED there. A whistle blast, an "all aboard" and the LAS VEGAS LIMITED



The last LAS VEGAS LIMITED, Amtrak train 781, descends Cajon Pass just east of San Bernardino on August 8. The Nevada Economic Development Department said that Iron Horse, Inc., a Las Vegas company that marketed tour packages for the train, had lost about $75,000 on it. Photo from Kodachrome by Phil Gosney.

glided into the dusk for almost the last time. Two weeks later was the actual burial.

This was the third death for Amtrak on this run. What's wrong? Advertising? What? Even the UP had trouble with its CITY OF LAS VEGAS HOLIDAY SPECIAL complete with lavish free buffet, player piano, legrest coaches, and $20 round trip fare (in 1966). Way back when, the Aero-Train made the run too. The question remaining is: Will Amtrak gamble again on another Las Vegas Adventure? Turn on, oh wheel of fortune...

RAIL CANADA (continued from page 4)

the campaign will be: "At CN, keeping Canada on the go is a business as well as a responsibility." CN VP Jean Cormier, who will direct the program, had a lot to say about passenger trains: "If you're running a passenger train into a very small country town and you're getting only three passengers a week, that's extremely wasteful of resources. Yet if you've been living there for 50 years, you expect a train coming into town as a God-given right... Maybe it's in the long-term interest for a bus to go thru the town instead of a very expensive train, but unless you explain that to them, how are they going to understand?" Cormier told the press that opinion research shows that Canadians didn't care whether CN made money, as long as CN provided the service people wanted. He said, however, that CN management was concerned about deficits and wanted to operate in a business-like manner. An earlier campaign slogan, "At CN, we're not in business to waste money", bombed, Cormier said.

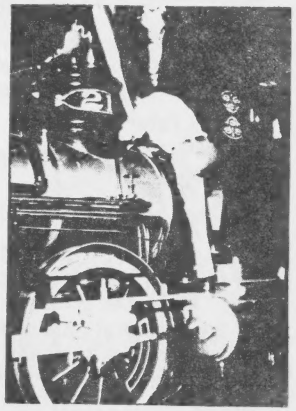
BRINGING NEVADA'S PAST INTO THE PRESENT

by Peter Roehm

My associate Dave Foley and I dropped by the Virginia & Truckee reincarnation at Virginia City, Nevada on August 21, and found former Dardanelle & Russellville (Arkansas) 4-4-0, 8, now lettered and numbered as V&T 28, in service on the mile-plus run toward Gold Hill with one old coach and two open gondola-type cars.

The run takes place on original right-of-way and lasts about 40 minutes. Those interested in locating it will find it about two blocks east of the main drag, "C" St., more or less just below the old Fourth Ward School.

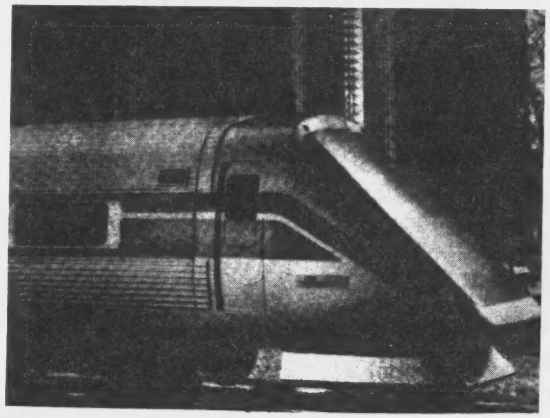
Present plans call for extension into Gold Hill next year, but just how much farther will depend upon money, as there are some former bridged areas that will have to be filled and some changes made in the former right-of-way alignment. A recent study on the computer indicates that complete refurbishing of all V&T equipment just to static display status would cost $400,000. There is a former coach undergoing restoration at the station site and the young man there mentioned that he had removed some 63 layers of paint to date (car was often given new paint for each movie it appeared in).



V&T engine 21 "J.W. Bowker" resides at the restored Central Pacific depot in Sacramento, CA. Photo by Message Media.

As for equipment, it is all over the mountains and the valleys: On C Street one finds a former baggage car used for boullion; enroute to Gold Hill there is the former Gold Hill depot well intact and in a narrow hollow between Gold Hill and Silver City rests an old coach used as a dwelling; at Mound House there are additional coaches and baggage cars and 4-6-0 #27 (all used to sit adjacent to Highway 395 until moved in 1965 shortly after the cars were burned); entering Carson City, one finds the engine house still intact as well as the Carson City depot on the main street; a caboose is the Chamber of Commerce office in the center of town, and south of the town toward the Stewart and Lake Tahoe turnoffs rest several additional coaches and the hulk of 4-6-0 #25; also, the old, stylish water tank at Franktown may still be intact.

Whether the V&T ever makes it to Carson remains a costly question, but after many years (this writer was an early member and activist in the Nevada Heritage Society that helped keep the V&T idea alive in the mid-sixties) of effort the line is again under steam, so it is all forward from this point.



BUDD'S NEW CAR

The Budd Company's proposed SPV-2000 self-propelled car mentioned last issue is here shown in a Budd illustration. The company, builder of Amfleet cars, is working on a prototype. One important feature of the updated RDC-type car is its use of standard GM diesel truck engines for reliability. Budd says the rail vehicle will do 120 mph and will sell for about $750,000.

INTRODUCING THE CALTRAK SAN DIEGAN

In a joint press release on Aug 24, Amtrak and the California Dept. of Transportation announced the startup on Sep 1 of a fourth daily SAN DIEGAN train between Los Angeles and San Diego, to be called the CALTRAK SAN DIEGAN, since it is a joint effort of the two transportation bodies. The startup represents the first state action under a bill passed last year, sponsored by Senator James Mills of San Diego, to improve rail service in the Golden State.

The schedules of the new service, numbered 774 southbound and 777 north, are shown on the rear cover of this issue. The new runs use Amfleet equipment, as do the other three SAN DIEGAN roundtrips.

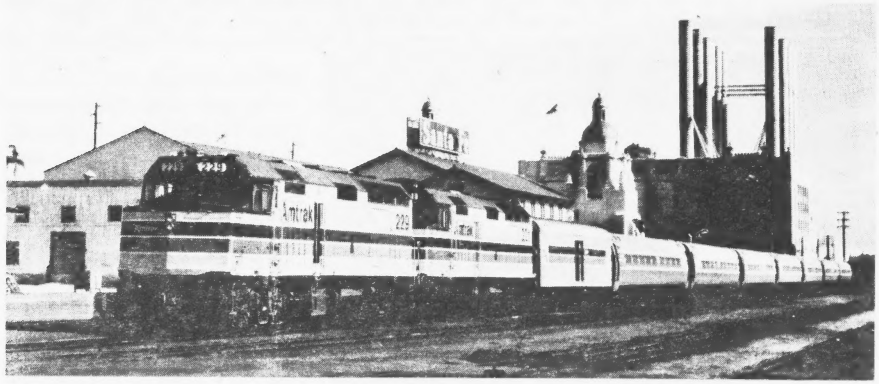
RTN'S Peter Bretz rode the inaugural run on Sep 1 (a combination press and revenue run) and will have a complete story next issue. He gives us the following preliminary report:

The first train left L.A. on time at 4:10pm, with the following consist: F40 engines 224 & 222; Amfleet cars 21139, 20027 (Amcafe), 21148, 21136, 21145, 21138, & 20025 (Amcafe). The last three cars were reserved for the press. Each stop on the first southbound trip contributed revenue passengers, including two dozen at Santa Ana. While the press release stated that Paul Reistrup and Gov. Brown were expected at the inaugural, these men did not appear. Dave Watts, Amtrak's head of operations, was on hand, as were Neal Owen and Arthur Lloyd of the Western Regional office of Amtrak, Adriana Gianturco, director of CALTRANS, Don Burns representing Gov. Brown, Senator Mills, Frank Mertz of Santa Fe, city councilmen and mayors.

A band played at L.A. Union Station as the train prepared to leave for the first time, and a number of paying riders boarded along with members of the media. A band played at Fullerton, a country western group at San Juan Capistrano. At other stops dignitaries greeted the train. Watts, Mills, Ms. Gianturco, and city councilmen spoke both at L.A. and San Diego. The train reached San Diego 10 minutes late, delayed by ceremonies. There it was washed with a portable washer similar to that used by Santa Fe in Albuquerque--the washer began operation there a short time ago on all SAN DIEGAN trains.

The first return trip left San Diego on time and maintained schedule all the way back to L.A. On the return run, the media people were treated to special steak dinners--80 were put aboard, and all used.

CALTRANS called the occasion a "landmark" beginning of improved rail passenger service in California. The train is on a 6-month experimental basis.



A SAN DIEGAN Amfleet consist rests between runs at San Diego on July 25. From a color transparency by Peter Bretz.

Urban-Suburban Transit

"PUBLIC BE VANNED" editorialized the San Francisco Chronicle Sep 2, the day after Southern Pacific had placed ads carrying a surprise announcement: the railroad was proposing to give a van (illustration at right) to groups of 8 peninsula commuters if they would agree to stop riding the SP's commute service between San Francisco and San Jose. The move seemed to be aimed at pressuring the Public Utilities Commission, now considering the railroad's request for doubled commute fares. Rider opinion of the plan, reported by the Chronicle appeared uniformly negative (see also QUOTES below). With 8 to a van, a giveaway of 1000 vehicles would handle the present total of 8000 commuters, reasoned the railroad.

SOME STRIKE NEWS: Washington State's ferry system went on strike just before the Labor Day weekend. The Los Angeles and San Francisco transit strike votes (see last issue) went like this: L.A. struck and S.F. didn't.

NEW HAVEN LINE of ConRail got a stop at the Bronx's Fordham Station beginning Sep 1, after ICC approval which culminated 4 years of legal hassle. Three trains daily in each direction will make the stop, which serves Fordham University.

GENERAL MOTORS CORPORATION got a grant of $3.1 million from the DOT late in August to study PRT ("people mover") systems.

AMERICAN MOTORS CORPORATION subsidiary is suing UMTA to prevent it from financing purchase of 393 GM-built buses by Texas transit systems, on the grounds that builders other than GM were excluded from the bidding.

THREE DETROIT DRIVERS drove at the 55mph speed limit on Interstate 94 in the morning rush hour Aug 25, side-by-side, blocking freeway lanes and creating a mammoth traffic jam. The 50-mile drive, which ended in arrests, was to demonstrate the lack of adherence to the speed limit.

AC TRANSIT SYSTEM'S board of directors late in August approved the purchase of 30 articulated buses of German design, to be built in the U.S., for transit use in the San Francisco Eastbay.

COSTS OF OWNING and operating an automobile have been tallied by the Federal Highway Administration, which says that a standard-size 1976 car will cost 17.9¢ a mile during its expected 10-year life; a compact car will cost 12.64¢ a mile. Copies of "Cost of owning and operating an automobile-1976" are free from FHA, U.S.D.O.T., HPA-1, 400 7th St. S.W., Washington DC 20590.

DELIVERY IS EXPECTED next month on the first of three jet ferries for Golden Gate Transit in San Francisco.

BIDS FOR THE first 5700 feet of tunnel of the Baltimore rapid transit project came in 7% under estimate. Apparent low bidder wants $41.658 million, and construction should start in November.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"Patronage of (SP's) Peninsula trains has been declining for several years. Even though commute fares are low compared to Greyhound, BART and other rail systems around the country, and were not increased last year, in 1975 the number of commuters dropped by 15% from the year before. The decline continues in 1976, and there are now only about 8,000 persons using the trains--half as many as SP had two decades ago, before major freeway improvements."

--Southern Pacific newspaper ad, Sept 1.

Mixed Train of Thoughts

A CAMPAIGN TRAIN sponsored by the Democratic National Committee will run Sept 20 and 21, with candidate Carter expected aboard the first day, Mondale the second. While the schedule had not been firmed up as we go to press (it should be by Sept 8), the train is expected to run New York to Pittsburgh the first day with 2 stops in New Jersey, overnighting in Pittsburgh; the second day continuing on to Chicago with several stops along the way. It appears likely that major cities along the BROADWAY LIMITED route will see the train. Committee spokesperson Joyce Kravitz said that Amfleet cars are wanted, and a special observation car will be requested--about 10 cars total. Committee members were meeting with Amtrak officials on Sept 3 to plan the run. Costs of the trip are not known yet. Earlier, the chairman of the Committee criticized Amtrak for not billing President Ford for the Michigan campaign train he used in the primary elections; however, the charge was erroneous, as Amtrak had billed the Ford Campaign Committee about $14,000 for it. In what appears to be the year of the campaign train revival, Gov. Carter reportedly also is requesting such a train to run in California's San Joaquin Valley later this month, also with Amfleet equipment. (The SAN JOAQUIN is now scheduled to receive Amfleet cars around Oct 31)..... PERSISTENT UNOFFICIAL REPORTS tell us that there will be Northeast Corridor schedule changes Sept 9, but Amtrak spokesmen have been unable to verify this. One reporter sends us an unofficial TurboTrain schedule as of that date: train 150 lv NY 4:10pm, ar Boston 8:50pm; #151 lv Providence 6:30am, ar New Haven 8:20am; #152 lv New Haven 4pm, ar Providence 6:05pm; #153 lv Boston 6:30am, ar NY 11:18am. He notes that trains 151/152 follow a modern-day "Clamdigger" schedule, like the old New London/New Haven RDC. An Amtrak spokesman said there will be a "mass" of N.E. changes in the Oct 31 timetables.....

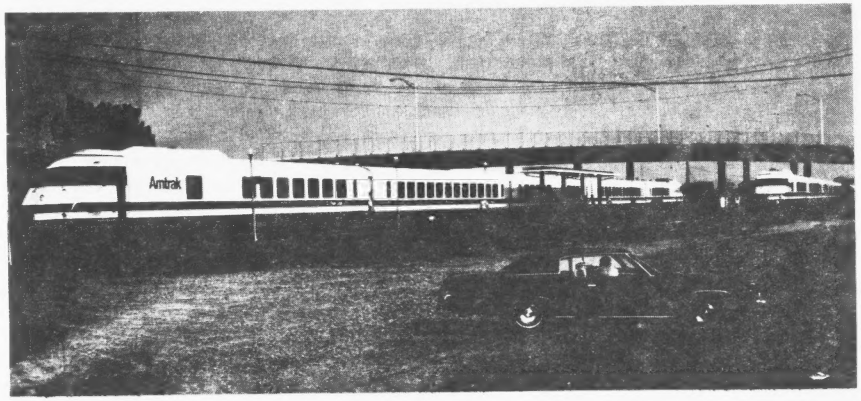
* * *

THE SWEDISH LOCOMOTIVE leased by Amtrak from ASEA (see RTN, 2nd Oct 1975) was seen in and around New York as early as Aug 30 by several readers. The engine was numbered X995, and was leading a test train composed of ConRail business car 20 (in blue & white), an Amtrak 5200-series coach, a PC Budd clocker coach, and two P-70 coaches. The X995 is in Amtrak's new color scheme..... THE COAST STARLIGHT which left Seattle Aug 15 was running 17min late into Davis CA when it struck a Mercedes-Benz auto just north of the depot, tearing the car in half but leaving the train unscratched. No report of physical injuries..... A FREIGHT DERAILMENTon the BN Aug 24 forced the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, train 5 to detour from Galesburg to Quincy to St. Joseph MO, up to Pacific Junction (Council Bluffs), while train 6 detoured from Omaha to Chicago over C&NW. The train used a C&NW SD40 engine on the front for automatic train control on that line. It left Clinton IA about 4pm and arrived in Chicago at 9:15pm. The derailment was at Afton IA, near Creston.....

* * *

FOUR DINING CARS have reportedly been bad-ordered from SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR consists in recent weeks because of fuel being placed in drinking water tanks of the cars at some point or points on the Denver-Oakland segment..... CANADIAN NATIONAL TOWER in Toronto had its official opening at midnight Jun 26. The "world's tallest structure" is expected to pull in a lot of tourist money. It features a glass enclosed elevator to an observation platform 1200 feet up..... FIAT RAIL CAR being leased and tried out by the Boston & Maine was to begin regular passenger service Aug 30, with one round trip to Beverly and one to Rockport. The 1972-design, 1975-built car performed well on Aug 19 during two special VIP roundtrips between Boston and Rockport..... THE SAN JOAQUIN, when it receives Amfleet equipment next month, is to have Amdinette cars for food service, and will use 60-seat Amcoaches with footrests..... UNUSUAL PASSENGER TRAIN on the SP: a deadhead move of 11 passenger cars and 2 engines Oakland-Portland was expected Sep 4, in preparation for a Directors Special in the Northwest. Seven SP business cars plus four other passenger cars, along with at least one Bicentennial locomotive, were to go..

THE ROHR TURBOLINERS entering service on the NY-Buffalo Empire Service will have public displays on Sep 18-19 along the route. On the 18th a trainset will start at each end of the line--Buffalo and Grand Central Terminal--and work its way to Albany, where the two will meet in the late afternoon of the 19th. Amtrak said one reason for delaying startup of Turbo service was that ConRail wanted temperature tests made in the Park Avenue tunnel. Amtrak also announced earlier a display of the trains at the NY State Fair in Syracuse from Aug 31 thru Labor Day, Sep 6. The train on display wasto include 2 power cars, a coach and a cafe car. A special press day display was to be held on Aug 29. One trainset began "irregular" service on the SALT CITY EXPRESS on Aug 19, phased in unannounced pending the official introduction. While tunnel tests were awaited, the train ran only Albany-Syracuse. Reader Walter Gehring observed it at Albany-Rensselaer Aug 20. It was led by power coach 150, and backed into the station about 6pm. Two men with "Field Tech." badges began instructing the conductor on door opening and closing procedures. Train 75 arrived on time from NY, and passengers made an across the platform change to the Turbo, which left nearly on time for Syracuse. Such a scene is pictured in the NY Times of Aug 21. Besides the two Turbo consists given in the First Aug issue, the following was seen at Albany: power coach 160, coach 178, food service coach 177, coach 173; rear power coach missing. The photo below,



from a color slide by Ken Maylath, shows 2 Turbos at Albany-Rensselaer Aug 22; on the left one set has just transferred passengers to conventional equipment to NY; on the right one sits in the yards (probably the consist listed above).....

IT FINALLY HAPPENED Department: after all these yards, RTN at last mixed up some lines of type in pasting up copy. On p.14, last issue, you probably already figured out that the second paragraph belonged at the top of the page. On p.18 the "bus with plus seats" should be "plush seats"..... A REPORT LEAKED to RTN says that candidate Jimmy Carter has been preparing a transportation policy statement to be released soon, and that under it the rails would fare "much better" than they have under the Coleman DOT. It seems likely that Pres. Ford would strengthen his hand by ousting Coleman before the elections. Says one person, "I don't see that much difference between the two parties on many issues, so I will vote according to the transportation policies they follow"..... THE NRHS CONVENTION that was to be held at Philadelphia's Bellevue-Stratford Hotel, the center of controversy over the mysterious illness that took over 25 lives after this summer's American Legion convention, was shifted at the last minute to the Sheraton. Paul Reistrup was among speakers at the meeting..... SOME MORE DETAILS on the Turbo temperature tests noted above: the trains are equipped with 3rd rail capability for running under New York City, but temperature tests were desired for the inevitable time when an electric power breakdown would require them to run there on turbine power..

THE BACKWARDS STATION: The Washington Post on Aug 20 ran a big article about the Washington train station and its transformation into a National Visitors Center. The paper printed big diagrams of the structure, but they were printed backwards on the page. That seemed to symbolize the snafu that construction there has created. Point of the article was summarized in its first sentence: "With passenger trains making an impressive comeback, a consultant has recommended that much of Union Station be reclaimed from its new use as the National Visitor Center to become a major transportation terminal again." A second article the next day called the center "a cultural fiasco as well as an economic boondoggle"..... "THE AMERICAN EXPRESS", customer newsletter of the American Express Co., in its Sep issue offers guidance for people who feel nervous when flying: "Close your eyes, breathe deeply and slowly, and think about something peaceful." Like you could pretend you're in an Amclub car..... WE PROMISED YOU the May and Jun ridership figures of Amtrak this issue, but the Jun figures have not been released yet, so we'll try again next time..... JAPAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS, reports the Wall Street Journal (Sep 3), caught 4.4 million passengers cheating on their tickets in a 42-day crackdown started in July. This brought in $8.6 million in additional revenue.....

* * *

A MAJOR ARTICLE on Amtrak, in two installments, appeared in August in many newspapers, by AP writer Michael Putzel. The article was well-researched, but in our opinion is overly negative about Amtrak's funding arrangements. We like the comments received from a reader who works with a major Western magazine--"the letter I should have (but didn't) send to Business Week" (that publication also had an article, "The fight for control of the Northeast Corridor", in its Aug 23 issue). Says our reader, "Why must every article on Amtrak start out with reference to X dollars in 'subsidy' which it has received? I would like to recommend that every article on trucking, on airlines, on waterways be given equal space to show the amount of subsidies--direct and indirect--received by those modes. Amtrak's sin is that it is receiving a direct subsidy, while the other modes receive 'services' or share their subsidies with pleasure boaters, drivers, and private pilots".....

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COMMENTS ON THE SOUTHWEST LIMITED's Turquoise Rooms last issue are answered by reader Mike Blaszak, who tells us that "several so-called railfans have been actively ripping off the unique sculptures" from the rooms, and that's one reason they have been closed to the public..... AN AMTRAK AD for the COLONIAL in August was headed: "How to get to Europe on an Amtrak train" and suggested taking the COLONIAL to Busch Gardens' "Old Country" inVirginia..... WASHINGTON STATE'S COMMUNITY Development Office, under a contract with the FRA, has just received $140,000 for a 2-year study of a north-south railroad thru the state. Other studies in Oregon and California will be combined with it to assess the feasibility of the much-talked of high speed Tijuana-to-Vancouver line, and to help improve train service in general..

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER FOURTH will see CTA and other commuter fares rising in the Chicago area, from the action of the RTA. CTA fares go up a nickel..... ILLINOIS CENTRAL GULF and New York Air Brake Co. have signed a joint contract with Amtrak to prepare trucks for Amtrak's new bilevel cars. NYAB will supply truck components and ICG will assemble them at Woodcrest shops and ship them to Pullman-Standard....

AN UNCONFIRMED REPORTfrom Canada has it that since CP has been chosen for the federally-funded high speed train demonstration service Montreal-Quebec, CN will discontinue service on the route and CP will take over--possibly with dome cars and other conventional equipment until the new high speed trains arrive.....

A CURRENT RUMOR going around, not confirmed by Amtrak, is that the SILVER STAR may be extended from Tampa to Venice, FL..... NORTHEAST CORRIDOR SERVICE is now mostly Amfleet, including a lot of NY-Philadelphia locals. Amtrak didn't buy clocker cars from ConRail, and is using as many Amfleet cars as are available.....

A RELIABLE SOURCE tells us that mail cars will definitely be placed on the PALMETTO soon.....

CARS & CONSISTS

*The following private cars were in Kansas City during the Republican National Convention in August (list from David Peironnet): KCS "Tolmak"; KCS "Kay-See"; BN "Red River"; Amtrak 10,000; MoPac 1; Smoky Hill "Hospitality" (ex-KCS) & Smoky Hill "Frisco 3" (ex-SLSF 3 "Oklahoma"; both cars owned by Smoky Hill Rwy & Historical Soc, & leased by NBC News during convention); Santa Fe "Mountainaire"; Santa Fe 60 (former 506, full length dome lounge observation built for S.F. CHIEF); Santa Fe "Topeka"; Santa Fe 315 (?) steam car; UP "Pacific Domain", UP "Wyoming" (ex-"Sun" series sleeper); UP 114; a BN "River" series business car for RR special agents; SLSF "Frisco 2"; Rock Island 100; (Rock Island "Lake Michigan" schedule to come but remained in Chicago); C&NW 400.

*Two ex-NYC coach-observation cars, 3870 & 3871, seen deadheading east thru Cleveland on rear of train 48 LAKE SHORE LTD on Aug 11; previously used on BLUE WATER. What is their new assignment?

*ARROWHEAD, train 763, Superior, Aug 15: engine 345 (E8A); cars 1710, 6804, Milw 630.

*CANADIAN, CP train 2, Winnipeg, Aug 10: engines 1416, 1411 (FP7A's); cars 610 (bag-dorm), coaches 102, 122; Skyline dome 514; "Abbott Manor", "Chateau Jolliet", diner "Kent", "Craig Manor", "Chateau Argenson", "Banff Park" dome obs. Train 2, Montreal section, Sudbury, Aug 11: engines 1416, 1408 (FP7A's); cars 606 bag-dorm; coach 127; Skyline dome 514; diner "Alexandra", "Craig Manor", "Chateau Argenson", "Banff Park" dome obs. Train 12, Toronto section, Sudbury, Aug 11: engine 1411; cars 610 bag-dorm; coaches 102, 122; Skyline dome 507; "Abbott Manor", "Chateau Jolliet", diner"Kent", "Kokanee Park" dome obs.

*ConRail-TH&B-CP Rail train 321 (Toronto-Buffalo) at Toronto Aug 14: cars 9115 (RDC-1), 9200 (RDC-4).

*CN train 175 (Hervey-Senneterre, Que.) at Hervey Aug 16: engines 6524 (FP7), 6785 (FPA4); cars 9624 baggage; coaches 5431, 5413; lounge "Matinee"; coaches 5298, 5224, 5299; diner-lounge "Silver Lake" (ex-GTW); 8 sec-2 cmpt-1 D.R. heavyweight sleepers "Regina", "Wainwright". CN train 175 (Senneterre-Cochrane, Ont.) at Senneterre Aug 17: engine 6524 (FP7); cars 9672 baggage, 5413 coach. CN train 179 (Senneterre-Noranda-Rouyn) at Senneterre Aug 17: engine 6785 (FPA4); cars 9624 bag, 5431 coach.

*NORTHLAND, CN-ONR train 98, Kapuskasing, Ont., Aug 17: engine 1517 (ONR FP-7); cars ONR 411 bag, CN "Green Gables" sleeper, ONR 812 coach. Same at Cochrane, Ont.: engine 1517; cars ONR 411 & 410 (bag), "Green Gables", ONR coaches 812, 806; CN 4885 snack coach.

*SUPER CONTINENTAL, CN train 1, Hornpayne, Ont., Aug 19: engines 4100 (GP9), 6630 (F7B), 6511 (F7A), 6625 (F7B); cars 9648 & 9649 (bag); coaches 5599, 5506, 5468, 5476; coach coffee shop 760; Dayniters 5715, 5731; lounge-sleeper "Cape Porcupine"; dinette 427; sleepers "Green Bank", "Euclid", "Edmonton"; lounge "Gaiete"; diner 1342; sleepers "Enfield", "Eastview", "Equity", "Iroquois"; bag-dorm 9478. Train 2, same: engines 6771 (FPA4), 6616 (F7B), 6528 (FP7A), 6620 (F7B); cars 9614, 9661 (bag); coaches 5774, 5487, 5596, 5472; coach coffee shop 756; Dayniters 5705, 5702; lounge sleeper "Cape Breton"; dinette 425; sleepers "Green Cabin", "Elcott", "Englee"; lounge "Sans Souci"; diner 1378; sleepers "Elrose", "Endcliffe", "Emperor", "Deep River", "Isabella."

*CN train 675, Hornpayne, Ont., Aug 19: engine 4418 (GP9), steam generator 15471; baggage 9640, 9611; coaches 5581, 5283.

*JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY/MOUNTAINEER, train 50/54, Chicago Aug 23: engines 402, 548; cars 1170, 6072, 2817, 5669, 5676, 6017, 8201, 6046, 7800, 2155.

*ADIRONDACK, train 69, Aug 15: engines PC 5001 (FL9) NY-Harmon, Amtrak 265 (E8 in black paint) Harmon-Albany, D&H 19 (PA-1) Albany-Montreal; cars (all D&H) 42 "Adirondack Lodge" lounge, 34 coach (ex-EL), 202 coach, 204 "Essex County" coach.

*WASHINGTON IRVING, train 72, Albany Aug 17: engine PC 259; cars 6436, 3954.

Express Ads

CHARTER THE AMTRAK-APPROVED PRIVATE CAR "MINNEAPOLIS CLUB." This beautiful round end observation-lounge (with full wet bar) seats 32 passengers. Excellent for Reno weekend parties. Reserve your choice date now from GREAT WESTERN TOURS, Sheraton-Palace Hotel, Suite 900, San Francisco 94105. (415) 398-2994.

Dining car china dishes and glasses, several railroads. Stamped envelope brings list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, Kansas 67213.

"STEAMY" -- FOR YOUNG RAIL ENTHUSIASTS! "Steamy" is a locomotive on the ex D & RGW narrow gauge, now the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad. 28 pages to color, plus an exciting story, gives youngsters a feeling for Rocky Mountain Railroading as it was. $2.00. Dave Ulmer, 1407 Holmes Drive, Colorado Springs CO 80909.

October 9, 10, 1976: A Branch Line Ramble over scenic freight only lines of the Canadian National Railways will be operated out of London, Ontario each day using Budd RDCs. Saturday trip will operate to Stratford, Listowel and Kincardine, and return. Sunday trip (one way with Budd cars, return via regular train at extra fare from Burlington) to Toronto via St. Thomas (via old London and Port Stanley interurban route), to Tillsonburg Junction, Lynden, Guelph, Georgetown, Burlington and Toronto. Saturday trip $22.00, Sunday trip $18.00, both days $38.00. For further information, including return fares from Burlington and hotel reservations in London, write: Branch Line Ramble, Windsor-Essex Division, Canadian Railway Historical Association, 300 Cabana Road East, Windsor, Ontario N9G 1A3.

CASS SCENIC WEEKEND! Riley south Oct 15 from DC, north Oct 17. $55.00 includes transportation and lodging. Meals available. Hoosierail Tours 202-483-0369.

COLORADO TIMETABLES of long ago have been reprinted by us, and over 30 varieties are available. Send for lists. Colorado Railroad Museum, P.O. Box 10, Golden, Colorado 80401.

CHESAPEAKE & OHIO STEAM/DIESEL Calendar for 1977. Thirteen full 8½x11" photos and appointment style calendar. Unfolds to 11x17; heavy gloss paper; wide variety of freight and passenger action. $3.00--or $3.50 via First Class Mail. C&O Historical Society, P.O. Box 417, Alderson, W.Va. 24910.

RAIL TRAVEL NEWS ADVERTISING RATES: Express Ads $1.00 per line of 80 spaces. Display ads (camera-ready copy) $25.00 per half-page (maximum size--4x5 inches). $12.50 for quarter page. Write: Message Media, Ad Dept., P.O. Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. Thank you!

West Coast Rail Sale, now through Dec 18th. Only $109.00 round trip coach between San Diego/Los Angeles/Santa Barbara and Portland/Seattle/Vancouver. Still time to ride the Royal Hudson too! Reserve now through the rail specialists, Let's Travel, 3780 Elizabeth St, Riverside CA 92506; 714-787-8350.

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TRAINS BUILT AMERICA

SAVE THE TRAINS

LETTERS (continued from page 2)

In your First July issue (p. 13) there is the comment: "Thomas Cook Timetable for June shows a massive reduction in European dining car service for economy reasons. Buffet or snack cars, or no food car at all, are replacing many diners. Most European trains now have only 1st and 2nd class coaches, with no lounges, diners, or domes." This is completely inaccurate and you are doing your readers a disservice by reporting same. Not only do I receive and peruse in detail Cooks Continental Timetables every month, but my job at CN requires me to evaluate any changes made to rail passenger services around the world. In addition, I was in Europe between July 1 and 23, riding passenger trains in 10 countries, and can assure you there is no massive reduction in their dining car and lounge services.

It is true that the dome cars on the RHEINGOLD have been retired due to age, but they have been replaced by bar-lounge cars. Some vintage restaurant cars have been replaced by more modern self-service cars (Grill-Express in France; Quick-Pick in Germany; Self-Service in Italy) but this is a process which has been going on progressively since 1966 when first introduced in Sweden. Passengers can still obtain a variety of full-course hot meals in such vehicles and consume same at a comfortable table in the catering vehicle. The TEE (Trans-Europe Express) and other major train networks, such as the IC Netz of Germany, Swiss Express in Switzerland, TS of Austria and Corail/Rapides of France continue to offer superb restaurant services.

In the Second July issue (p. 3) there is a letter from one Robert A. Brown criticizing the passenger service of European railways for a variety of reasons. I do not know who planned his trip, but it is incredible that he traveled first class and found no air-conditioning! Obviously he never traveled on any TEE trains, which are much superior to any train existing in North America. I notice he did not comment on their ride quality, which is superb in most countries there, or traveling smoothly at 100 to 125mph with a choice of many departures daily between any two city pairs. If Mr. Brown will contact me, I will provide him with a list of trains which are 1st class, air-conditioned and provide full catering services complete with butter at every meal!

If Mr. Brown kept his eyes open, he would note the reason for the lack of wyes in Europe. Every locomotive in Europe has a cab at each end to permit completely bidirectional operation, a necessity due to the many reversals at stub-end stations there. That is also the reason for seats facing each other. However, I fail to understand why a lack of roundhouses, or hotels charging $30 per night is a legitimate criticism of European railways! On this last point, if one wishes to stay at "Americanized" establishments such as Hiltons, Intercontinentals, etc., that is the going rate. Mr. Brown would be well advised to stay at smaller business hotels near the stations (such as I do) where a room with bath is in the $15 range or less.

Perhaps Mr. Brown would like to offer comments on some good points about European rail passenger services, such as the downtown location of rail stations, frequent departures, fast point-to-point schedules, smooth ride, etc., which are sadly lacking in his benchmark, Amtrak. While the latter organization is trying hard, it will be many years before they, or we here in Canada, can offer an intercity rail passenger service comparable to that of Western Europe.

W. H. Coo, Senior Planning Officer
Canadian National, Passenger Marketing
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

In the best interests of the traveling public, the Southern Railway should enter Amtrak.

Jammie G. Cooke
Mt. Vernon, New York